

Regional Media Ltd – Annual Report 2019

Introduction

Regional Media Ltd was formed in April 2015 after the purchase of all the shares from Garnett Dickinson.

Our products mainly cover Rotherham, South & East Barnsley and parts of the borough of Doncaster.

Products:

*Rotherham Advertiser
Rotherham Record
Dearne Valley Weekender
Chase Magazine
www.rotherhamadvertiser.co.uk*

Editor and Regulated Entity's responsible person: Andrew Mosley

Our editorial standards

Our approach to editorial standards is the same as most media organisations.

We always verify our sources and authenticate documents and, if we cannot, we do not go ahead with the story. The reporters, newsdesk, sub-editors and myself, the editor, all adhere to this policy.

All our stories are published in line with guidance and law set out in the Editor's Code of Practice and McNae's Essential Law for Journalists, of which all reporters have copies and refer to.

We have not sought guidance from IPSO over the past year, though a small number of complaints have been directed to them and have either not been taken further or we have not heard that anything has been found against us.

Our approach is always to verify sources and authenticate documents as was – and still is – the case with a large number of stories related to the Rotherham child sexual exploitation scandal in which orders were made in trials that previous trials could not be referred to, even



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though some of the defendants were the same people. Victims have not been named, suspects not been named and locations of alleged incidents have been left out unless we are 100 per cent sure of their accuracy. Two victims – who requested to be known as survivors – have waived anonymity and we have named them after receiving written agreement that we can do so.

We would never print a story involving evidence contained within a document having not seen and carried out checks on the article ourselves.

This policy, referred to in previous years, has continued over the past year as more perpetrators of child sexual exploitation have been brought before the courts. This will no doubt continue for several more years.

We have regularly fought in court against attempts to restrict the use of names and addresses of victims in the child sexual exploitation – and other - trials. We have also recently won an apology from a coroner who held an inquest in private.

Pre-publication guidance

If we were unsure or needed legal guidance ahead of publication we would contact IPSO for advice.

Other resources are also available to us for guidance such as the Society of Editors, McNae's Essential Law for Journalists and the Editors Code of Practise. Two years ago we also sought advice from solicitors regarding one story involving traders being forced out of Rotherham's [REDACTED] by [REDACTED]. After much correspondence by email and telephone the complainant recently reduced his initial claim of £125,000 to £10,000 then simply to a 'positive article'.

Our complaints-handling process

We will accept complaints by phone, email, letter, in person or via social media and the complaint will at first be handled by a reporter and, if a conclusion is not reached, escalated to newsdesk and then the editor, who records and keeps details of all complaints even if a conclusion has been agreed.

We will always attempt to deal with the complaint on the day it is made or, if that is not possible due to, for example, a reporter's absence, as soon as possible afterwards – always within seven days.



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We will always attempt to come to a conclusion that is satisfactory to both parties, which may result in a correction published in a position in the paper agreed with the complainant, an apology, or sometimes it may simply be that a discussion/meeting clears the air.

If an agreement cannot be reached we will refer the complainant to IPSO and its complaints procedure, which we will then follow.

All complaints are logged with and by the editor.

All complainants are made aware of the code of practise by phone, email or letter depending on how the complaint was originated or how they have requested communication to be carried out.

The contacts of all editorial staff are on page two of our publications and staff do make complainants aware of IPSO and the complaints procedure. Details of IPSO are available on our website.

Our training process

All reporters are fully qualified and have undertaken law courses.

All staff have copies of the Editor's Code of Practice and McNae's Essential Law for Journalists and refer to these on a daily basis.

There are no current plans for further training, though refresher courses are always a considered option.

Our record on compliance

We have had numerous complaints from people who believed we had breached GDPR through printing names and addresses given in court or provided on court lists. We have explained the law regarding this to each person and reached conclusions where no further action has been taken.

We have had the previously mentioned on-going (two years) complaint regarding the development at [REDACTED] in which [REDACTED] has employed various solicitors. We originally responded that we did not believe we had breached any code. The complainant eventually reduced his 'demands' and we eventually agreed to a 'positive'



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article about the [REDACTED], though it appears the building is now up for sale and no further correspondence has been received from [REDACTED] complainant.

We have not, in the period of the past year, accepted a breach of the Editor's Code of Practice, but if we believed we had breached the code we would contact IPSO for advice upon a complaint being made.

Resources

Editor's Code of Practice and McNae's Essential Guide to Journalists.

Andrew Mosley

(Editorial director Regional Media Ltd)



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